

Michigan
Department
of Human
Services

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394

*Story on/re DHS at this spot

Articles in Today's Clips

Thursday, July 27, 2006

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

Click the link below to read stories on that topic

Welfare caseload*

Budget

CPS training*

Child abuse*

Welfare caseloads see second increase

Gongwer News Service July 26, 2006

Families receiving cash assistance from the state increased for the second consecutive month in June, while the number of families who received Food Assistance Program aid rose for the ninth consecutive month, according to reports from the Department of Human Services.

The Family Independence Program had 80,280 cases in June, up from 79,133 cases in May and 78,198 cases in April, which was down from 78,238 cases in March and 78,889 cases in February. The caseloads represented 216,738 people, up from 213,562 people in May.

In June, there were 523,055 families receiving Food Assistance Program benefits, compared to May when there were 519,202 families.

Childcare cases saw another increase in June with 62,969 cases, up from May's caseload of 61,855 and after a sharp decline in April to 60,891 families from 64,685 in March. The June caseload represented 118,493 children.

Earned income cases stayed at 33 percent of those required to find work reporting income after a drop to that amount in April from March's 34 percent. The percent of cases exceeding the federal 6-month limit has also held steady, at about 13 percent since October.

Legislature finishes the 2006-07 budget

Gongwer News Service July 26, 2006

There was no all-night session, no hurried negotiations on a last minute controversy, no frustrated vote trading, so it hardly seemed possible the Legislature completed work on the 2006-07 budget on Wednesday. But in fact, the budget is now in the books, as the House and Senate moved relatively quickly to complete action on the conference reports to the budgets.

Only a few of the budgets even generated comment as the House and Senate approved the measures, the greatest concern probably being over potential cuts to the Wayne County-Detroit community mental health system if it does not become an authority.

There are some elements of the 2006-07 budget yet undone, most significantly the capital outlay budget. In recent years, however, it has not been unusual for the capital outlay budget to be completed past the October 1 start of the fiscal year.

In the Senate, members applauded Appropriations Committee chair Sen. Shirley Johnson (R-Troy) for shepherding her last budget through the Legislature. Ms. Johnson is term-limited from running for re-election, and between her time on the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate panel has worked on 24 budgets.

COMMUNITY HEALTH: It was SB 1083M, which totals \$11.2 billion - \$2.95 billion of which are general fund dollars, which drew the most comment over the potential cuts to the Wayne County Community Mental Health. The budget passed 28-9 in the Senate, and 88-18 in the House.

Under the budget, the mental health agency administrative functions will be cut by more than \$3 million a month unless it reorganizes as an authority by the end of the year.

Sen. Hansen Clarke (D-Detroit) argued that the cuts, even though they are supposed to be targeted to administrative functions, will hurt patients.

And Rep. Ed Gaffney (R-Grosse Pointe Farms) said, "This is like putting a gun to the head of Wayne County. Why would we want to punish the most vulnerable and those who are the least able to defend themselves?"

House Appropriations Chair Rep. Scott Hummel (R-DeWitt) said the fine was not a priority for the chamber (a \$50 million cut was stripped out from the budget when it passed in May), but that compromise was required to move the budget process forward.

But not everyone saw the fine, which can be recouped if the authority is created within the fiscal year, as a bad thing.

Ms. Johnson said the only people to suffer will be the "employees, the bloated employees."

Most counties operate their community mental health on an authority basis, she said, and, "If you

care about the mentally ill, as you know I do, then damn it you are going to have to do something."

Rep. Bill McConico (D-Detroit) said he thought the fine would create a dialogue between the city and county and put an end to turf wars.

"What we know right now is mental health services in Wayne County are not effective," Mr. McConico said.

The total budget, which is also about \$30 million below the current year's appropriation, also makes no changes in eligibility for Medicaid recipients.

HIGHER EDUCATION: SB 1088ii represents the first actual increase in funding for the state's 15 public four-year colleges since the 2001-02 budget.

The budget totals \$1.787 billion in total spending, with \$1.6 billion in general funds. The largest individual percentage university increases in funding go to those schools officials have said received the lowest per pupil expenditures: Grand Valley State University, Saginaw Valley State University and Oakland University.

Grand Valley's overall increase totaled 6 percent. The lowest increases were allocated to Wayne State University and Michigan Technological University.

Sen. Deborah Ch2M (D-Buften) said the budget was the best higher education budget she had been able to work on for the last four years.

Mr. Hummel also praised approval of a funding formula for the universities, saying, "This is one the most significant steps we could take."

The bill passed 37-0 in the Senate and 104-2 in the House.

SCHOOL AID: The state's largest single budget, in HB 1095 it includes a \$2 1 0 per pupil increase in the foundation allowance. It passed the Senate on a 36-1 vote and in the House on a 103-3 vote.

Mr. Hummel said that while per-student funding was reduced compared to the measure which passed the House, that he is hopeful the dollars will produce tangible results and that more spending can be found in future budgets.

And House Minority Leader Dianne Byrum (Onondaga) said, "For too long, the status quo has left our students struggling to keep up and our workers struggling to get by while they see their jobs getting outsourced. This plan sends a clear signal: We're going to fight for the best schools and the best-trained workforce around."

The budget totals \$13.2 billion. Included in it is \$20 million to be paid a number of school districts with declining enrollments, and of that \$7 million is to go to the Detroit Public Schools.

CORRECTIONS: SB 1084, which totals \$1.8 billion, most in general funds, includes funding to hire 46 new parole agents (which has taken on greater urgency since a former parolee released in error confessed to committing three murders earlier this year) said Sen. Alan Cropsey (R- DeWitt).

But he also raised a new concern in the budget and that is the fast growing cost of health care for prisoners. The health care section was increased by 11 percent over the current fiscal year and now totals 10 percent of the budget, Mr. Cropsey said. The state is going to have to look at some way to change the requirements it now operates under on health care for prisoners, he said.

The budget passed the Senate on a 37-0 vote and in the House on a 104-2 vote.

EDUCATION: Without debate the conference report on SB 1085ii was approved by the Senate on a 37-0 vote and in the House on a 105-0 vote. The budget totals \$90.7 Trillion, with just \$6.7 million in general funds, which is \$30 million less than the current year because a number of programs were moved into K- 12 school aid.

D.E.Q. On a 37-0 vote in the Senate and a 105-0 vote in the House, SB 1086id was approved. The budget totals \$444.2 million, \$33.8 million in general funds.

D.N.R.: Sen. Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau) said all payments in lieu of taxes now required will be paid in 2006-07 under SB 10949. The budget totals \$291.6 million, \$25 million in general funds. The budget passed the Senate on a 37-0 vote and in the House on a 104-1 vote.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES: SB 1082id represents good news for once, said Sen. Ron Jelinek (R-Three Oaks) since it is the first increase in that area in several years. The budget totals \$281.6 million and was passed 37-0 in the Senate and 104-2 in the House.

Children's protective workers get new training

Updated: July 26, 2006 05:34 PM EDT WOOD TV Channel 8

GRAND RAPIDS - The Michigan State Police will begin training children's protective services workers in enhanced investigation training.

It's part of an effort to reform Michigan's child welfare system. All case workers will be required to spot danger signs in the children they oversee. The new program will allow for more thorough investigations and result in more informed decisions on individual cases.

State police will teach case workers improved interview techniques, how to use an evidence checklist and other new elements.

Social workers to learn techniques from state police

WWMT.com

July 16, 2006 - 4:19PM LANSING (AP) - Child protection workers across Michigan will be trained by the state police to improve interview techniques used to evaluate whether abuse has occurred inside homes.

Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow and State Police Director Colonel Peter Munoz say the training will start this fall, and all protective services workers should be trained by the end of next year.

Law enforcement will provide social workers with more detailed checklists to use in homes where allegations of abuse have been filed, along with training on how to conduct interviews and write reports.

Udow says state police already have conducted a pilot program with social workers in Saginaw County, and the response was positive.

Caseworkers to get skills training

Child services staffers to learn interview methods from police

By Tricia Bobeda

Lansing State Journal

Published July 27, 2006

The mother sobbed. She denied abusing her child and tried to convince the Child Protective Services caseworker that she was innocent.

Department of Human Services director Marianne Udow, who joined the caseworker at the interview, left the home feeling sympathetic for the parent.

But the caseworker - who deals with an average of 100 cases of abuse and neglect each year - knew they were just crocodile tears.

Udow said caseworkers' ability to read situations is an art, and with the help of Michigan State Police, the department hopes to transform it into a science.

The Department of Human Services announced Wednesday that it is teaming up with the state police to train its 809 caseworkers to use more investigative techniques and tools this fall.

"Our staff who do this work are social workers (and) for the most part tend to look for the strengths in a family," Udow said in a June interview.

"VAich is a great thing, but they don't always bring what the police do to an investigation - investigative

techniques that really try to sort out the truth in a situation."

All caseworkers will be required to complete the training.

The program was piloted in Saginaw County and focuses on behavioral analysis during interviews, memory enhancement, report development and interrogation.

Saginaw CPS supervisor Bill Weston said one of the difficulties for caseworkers is documenting enough evidence so charges of abuse or neglect hold up in court.

Weston has seen children returned to dangerous situations because a case was thrown out, which he said may result in a child suffering or a child's death.

Weston said improving caseworkers' reporting and investigative skills could prevent future tragedies.

Police officials said the goal is to help caseworkers tell if someone is lying, not make social workers into cops.

"It's a natural partnership," state police director Colonel Peter Munoz said. "Interviewing and interrogating is what we do."

Contact Tricia Bobeda at 377-1061 or tbobeda@lsj.com

Parents try, but fail to get rights reinstated

Judge continues to keep kids separated from parents

By Tam Asher

WJRT TV Channel 12

FLINT (WJRT) - (07/25/06)-- Their daughter died from neglect while in their care and a judge has again denies Rose Kelley's parents the right to visit their remaining children...

After receiving updates on the progress of their remaining three children, today in court, Judge Robert Weiss decided it was still in the children's best interest to be separated from their parents Jeffrey Kelley and Michelle Bowen.

According to the experts who evaluated the children, all three have improved mentally, emotionally and physically in foster care, without the care of their parents.

The Genesee County prosecutor is still deciding whether to charge Bowen and Kelley with the death of their daughter Rose, after a medical examiner ruled the five-year-old died from neglect. The little girl suffered liver failure and was found dead in her parents' Flint home last June, in what police have described as deplorable conditions.

Judge Weiss today also cut off any sort of social services Kelley and Bowen have been receiving from the state.

Bowen and Kelley will be back in court in October, when the a jury trial will begin to decide the final status

of their parental rights

Trial set to see if Rose's siblings, parents will part

THE FLINT JOURNAL

Wednesday, July 26, 2006

By Paul Janzewski

A trial is scheduled for Oct. 25 to determine if a court will end three parents' rights to the surviving siblings of a young girl who died in squalor in her Flint home.

The trial, before Genesee Probate Judge Robert E. Weiss, also will include expert witnesses for prosecutors and defense attorneys to determine if Rose Kelley, 5, died because of neglect.

Dr. Ljubisa J. Dragovic, the Oakland County medical examiner, earlier ruled that Rose's death was a homicide. He said Rose died from a liver disease that was compounded by neglect.

Assistant Genesee County Prosecutor Marcie M. Mabry and attorneys - representing Michelle L. Bowen, the mother of all four children; Jeffrey Mitchell, the father of Bowen's oldest child; Jeffrey C. Kelley, the father of her three youngest children, including Rose; and the surviving children - will meet Sept. 19 at a pretrial hearing to make sure that all records, reports and other documents have been exchanged.

Weiss also ordered the parents to have no contact with the surviving children. Bowen, 31, and Kelley, 30, appeared in court with their attorneys but had no comment to the rulings. Besides Rose, they are also parents to a boy, 6, and a girl, 2. Mitchell, who fathered a girl, 10, with Bowen, was not in court.

A report from an official from the state Department of Human Services indicated Attorney Temia Carte, who is representing the children, agreed with that recommendation.

Weiss earlier ordered the evaluations to determine the effects, if any, of visitation with the children's parents.

Rose died June 3 in the family's flea- and lice-infested N. Franklin Avenue home after an untreated illness. Sick for five days, she was never taken to a doctor.

Police have said Bowen told them she feared her children would be taken from her if a doctor saw Rose's condition, which included severe head lice and possible malnourishment.

Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton earlier would not comment on the medical examiner's findings but said his office would review Dragovic's full report before deciding on criminal charges. He was not available Tuesday for comment. Weiss said his objective now is not reuniting the family but to do what is in the best interests of the surviving children.

"I do not believe (continuing parent time) in the best interests of the children," Weiss said.

He said that ultimately, they may be better off placed in foster care, where they would have "an opportunity to find a home with stability and love."

Owner of 51 pets pleads no contest

Doug Guthrie / The Detroit News 'Thursday, July 27, 2006

GROSSE POINTE FARMS -- A woman accused of keeping 42 cats, three dogs and six birds in her home and exposing two adopted children to the filth of excrement strewn throughout her home pleaded no contest to reduced charges Wednesday in Grosse Pointe Farms Municipal Court.

Sylvia Gray, 57, faces fines and up to 93 days in jail for accepting responsibility for one count of contributing to the delinquency of a minor and one count of animal abuse.

Other misdemeanor charges were dismissed in exchange for the plea. She will be sentenced Aug. 23.

Gray had been a volunteer with an animal rescue organization, which claimed she had refused to return cats that she had taken into her care in her home on Lakeview Street.

Police searched her home in MaN., finding the home crowded with animals and in filthy condition.

City ordinance limits homes to two dogs and two cats.

Thirteen children, who briefly were taken from Gray's custody, now live with her at her mother's home nearby, said Grosse Pointe Farms Detective Lt. Rick Rosati. The clerk declared the home on Lakeview to be uninhabitable and it remains vacant.

The dogs, cats and birds are in the hands of All About Animals, a rescue organization that will attempt to find new homes for them, Rosati said.

Boy tells judge about sexual abuse

The 12-year-old claims his father forced him to perform sex acts 14 times on five occasions.

Valerie Olander / The Detroit News Thursday, July 27, 2006

A 12-year-old boy spent more than two hours telling a judge on Wednesday about being raped by his father, who would call himself "Bubba" and order the boy to undress because it was "jail time."

The ordeal started in mid-April when he was sent to live with his father, a man he had seen only twice since he was 2 years old.

Daniel Sanford Tesen, 35, of Tyrone Township will stand trial in Livingston Circuit Court on charges of rape. He is being held on \$1 million bond in the county jail.

The boy, who is not being named by The News because of his age, testified in a closed hearing at the preliminary exam before Judge Suzanne Geddis in 53rd District Court. A summary of his accusations were read into the public record.

He detailed 14 sex incidents on five occasions. The abuse took place in the master bedroom, bathroom and living room.

The boy testified he was grabbed by his hair and choked and, more than once, ordered to clean up, swallow his own feces and perform a sex act on his father.

Tesen showed no emotion as he sat in his orange jail outfit while the summary was read to reporters in the courtroom.

The judge amended the charges at the request of the prosecutor to include five additional charges of first-degree criminal sexual conduct -- a total of 14 sexual incidents -- two counts of distributing obscene material to a child, one count of third-degree child abuse and immunity for not sending the boy to school.

"The (boy's) testimony went beyond the initial charges," Assistant Prosecutor Dan Rose said.

Rose declined comment as to why a charge of torture was dropped, referring questions to Prosecutor David Morse, who could not be reached for comment.

The boy was sent to live with his father in April because he was incorrigible, according to what the mother told police. They had lived in Las Vegas.

Defense Attorney Mack Spickard said the mother does not believe the boy's allegations of sexual abuse against his father.

Police were called by neighbors after the boy passed a note to the neighbor's child asking for help on May 26.

The victim and his younger brother, who was also in the home, have been placed in foster care by the Livingston County Department of Human Services. A hearing on neglect and abuse charges, terminating parental rights, is pending before Circuit Judge Stanley J. Latreille.

You can reach Valerie Olander at (517) 552-5503 or volander@detnews.com.

Mother charged with homicide of child

Autopsy shows that child died of unnatural causes

By Austen Smith, Editor Ypsilanti Courier

PUBLISHED: July 27, 2006

Deputies from the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office are investigating the tragic death of three-year-old Kayla Jop, who died on July 17 from extensive internal injuries.

The mother, 27-year-old Latoya Jop of Ypsilanti Twp., was arrested the day after the child was pronounced dead at St. Joseph Hospital in Superior Twp.

Last Thursday, Jop was charged and arraigned on one count of open murder, one count felony murder and one count first-degree child abuse. She is being held at the Washtenaw County Jail without bond, a preliminary trial was held yesterday.

On July 17 at approximately 4:20 a.m. county deputies along with Ypsilanti Twp. Fire and

Huron Valley Ambulance, responded to the 500 block of Villa Drive in Ypsilanti Twp. on a report that the three-year-old girl was unconscious and not breathing. But, emergency responders were too late as the girl was later pronounced dead after being transported to the hospital.

Cmdr. Dave Egeler with the sheriff's office said an autopsy report was completed the next day by the Washtenaw County Medical Examiner.

"It was determined that the child died from extensive internal injuries as a result of being

beaten," Egeler said. "The 911 call originally came in as a medical call, but the ambulance company called in later saying the child had been beaten."

No records found alleging sex abuse by private school teacher

Grand Haven Tribune

TOWSON, Md. (AP) - Authorities have been unable to find records of allegations against a private school teacher charged with sexually abusing a student decades ago.

Stanley Virgil Ashman, 60, was arrested last month in Birmingham, Mich., where he was teaching at the private Roeper School, police said. He is accused of having sex with a then-14-year-old girl at his Baltimore home and at the Park School in the 1970s.

The headmaster of the Park School issued a statement saying that he learned about the allegations in 1997, met with Ashman and contacted social services officials. Maryland law requires educators, doctors, nurses, police officers and human-services workers to report suspicions of child abuse to authorities.

But Baltimore County police and social services officials said a search of records produced no evidence that they had received such a report.

Maureen Robinson, a spokeswoman for Baltimore County Department of Social Services, said the agency has a database of calls, but no record of the school's call could be found.

"I'm not saying they absolutely didn't call," Robinson told The (Baltimore) Sun. "But our systems don't reflect that." A spokeswoman for the Park School said Tuesday that David Jackson, head of the school, called the county social services agency in September 1997 when he learned of allegations against Ashman and met with him. As a result of the meeting, Ashman resigned in 1997, Jackson said in the statement, which was released Monday after police announced Ashman's June arrest.

The county agency "was given the name, address and phone number of Mr. Ashman," according to Hillary Jacobs, a Park School spokeswoman. Jacobs said the school did not write a letter to the county, but that Jackson had kept his notes from the phone conversation with the authorities.

Jackson was unavailable for comment, Jacobs told The Sun.

Police said the abuse began in 1973, when the victim was in the ninth grade and Ashman was her teacher and student adviser at the Park School.

The victim told police she came forward when she learned Ashman was teaching again.

Randall Dunn, head of school at Roeper School in Michigan, said Ashman resigned at the end of this school year after six years, saying he was resigning because of an arrest in Baltimore.

"During his employment at Roeper, we received no complaints and he has been cleared by all criminal background checks prior to and during his tenure at the school," Dunn said in a statement. Ashman was released on \$25,000 bond.

'70s sex case is shock to Roeper

Teacher charged with child abuse July 26, 2006

BY LORI HIGGINS

FREE PRESS EDUCATION WRITER

Stanley Ashman has been charged in Baltimore with having sex with a young teenager in 1973-75.

A popular teacher at the Roeper School in Birmingham is charged with child abuse, a felony, for having sex with a former student in the early 1970s when he taught in Baltimore, police said Tuesday.

Stanley V. (Butch) Ashman was arrested June 9 in Birmingham and extradited June 20 to Baltimore.

The former student called Ashman on May 29 and he admitted having sex with her, according to police who listened to the call.

"He repeatedly apologized for his actions," police said.

Shortly after his arrest, Ashman, 60, resigned from his job as a history teacher at Roeper, an elite private school for gifted students with campuses in Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills.

"During his employment at Roeper, we received no complaints and he has been cleared by all criminal background checks prior to and during his tenure at the school," Head of School Randall Dunn said Tuesday, reading a prepared statement.

In an interview, Dunn said Ashman was a "well-regarded and beloved" teacher. "Folks are shocked and dismayed and sad," he said.

Calls to Ashman's Birmingham home Tuesday were not returned.

Ashman came to Roeper Upper School in 1999. From 1972 to 1997 he taught at the Park School in Baltimore, an elite private school serving more than 800 students from pre-kindergarten to 12th grades.

It was there that he befriended a girl, now 46, who told authorities in May that Ashman had sex with her over a three-year period, beginning when she was a ninth-grader.

It was when she learned that Ashman was teaching in Michigan that she contacted police in Maryland. "She was afraid he might victimize someone else. So she came forward," a police spokesman said. Ashman, who lived in Baltimore, was both a teacher and adviser to the girl.

According to the Baltimore County Police Department, the sexual relationship began one day when she was baby-sitting Ashmaifs children and he was home.

"Mr. Ashman laid her on the floor and had sexual intercourse with her. She remembers that he told her not to tell anyone because they both would get in trouble," the report said.

The two had sex several times a week in 1973-75 -- mostly at Ashman's house, but also in the school and in a wooded area of the campus, the report said.

The woman first reported her allegations in 1997 to officials at the Park School.

David Jackson, the head of the school, said in a statement Monday that Ashman resigned after the allegations came to light. Jackson also said he notified the Maryland Department of Social Services in 1997 of the allegations.

But Bill Toohey, spokesman for the Baltimore County Police Department, said Tuesday there is no evidence the school reported the allegation.

Marcia Ruff of Pleasant Ridge, whose daughter attends Roeper, said Ashman inspired students to love history. "He is just an extraordinary teacher. He was most students' favorite teacher," she said.

She said Roeper officials would not have known of the allegations since no charges had been filed before Ashman was hired.

And, she said, the community at the school is close enough that if anything inappropriate had happened, people would have known.

"People know each other within the school. We pay attention to each other," Ruff said.

Ashman has been released on \$25,000 bond. If he's convicted on the felony child abuse charge, he could be sentenced to up to 25 years in prison.

Baltimore County police ask that any other potential victims come forward by calling 410-853-3650.

Contact LORI HIGGINS at 248-351-3694 or hipgins@freoress.co. The Associated Press contributed to this report.